

Outside of his professional life as an engineer, Mr. Davis was a true community leader. He served as the Chief of the Bagdad Volunteer Fire Department for 25 years and was active in the Bagdad Village Preservation Association and Bagdad Waterfronts, Florida. Mr. Davis cherished his family and friends as part of the Emerald Coast Sandpipers RV club, as a member of the Blackwater Pyrates service organization, and as a lifelong member of the Bagdad United Methodist Church.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to honor the life and service of John Davis. My wife Vicki and I offer our prayers for his wife, Janet, his daughter Amelia, and their family. He truly will be missed.

**CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOY SCOUT TROOP 175**

**HON. KENNY MARCHANT**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 15, 2012*

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I celebrate the 50th anniversary of Boy Scout Troop 175 of Irving, Texas. The troop has a remarkable history of serving the community and developing young men into leaders.

Troop 175 was originally chartered at W.T. Hanes Elementary School in Irving. It then relocated its charter in 1981 to Northgate United Methodist Church in Irving.

Since its founding in 1962, Troop 175 has produced 27 Eagle Scouts with the first recorded promotion in 1971. The distinguished group of Eagle Scouts from Troop 175 include Craig Barton (1971), Paul Roberts (1975), Bobby Bell (1976), William Meers (1976), Mark Corry (1977), James Bush III (1986), Clyde Hogan Jr. (1988), Adrian Carrales (1989), Joseph Bush (1989), Andrew Bartlett (1991), Gregory Yoas (1992), Robert Daniel (1992), Travis Brandt (1998), James Cross (2000), Ryan Scott Barnett (2003), Stefan Austin Hopkins (2004), Reagan McNabb (2005), Ashwin Tharappel (2005), Robert Samczuk (2006), Frank Wright III (2006), Alexander Bichler (2007), Anish Tharappel (2007), Austin McNabb (2008), Samuel Anderson (2008), Colton Sligar (2010), Campbell Castleberry (2011), and William Canales (2012).

Throughout its 50 years, the troop has been guided by the leadership of Scoutmasters including Clyde Hogan, David West, Jerry Cross, Peter McNabb, James Roman, and Mark Sligar.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all my distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating Boy Scout Troop 175 for its 50 years of developing fine young men and community involvement.

**IN SUPPORT OF THE SYRIAN PEOPLE**

**HON. LAURA RICHARDSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 15, 2012*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to express my horror and outrage at the

events currently taking place across Syria. It has now been 15 months since the first protests flared up in response to the imprisonment of 17 teenagers in Dara for writing anti-government graffiti on a wall, and the death toll has risen to well over 13,000 men, women, and children.

For the past three decades the Syrian people have lived in a restive peace. Israel had claimed it to be its safest border, and minorities were treated relatively well compared to surrounding countries. President Assad transitioned easily into power after the death of his father, and was hailed as a reformist who would lead Syria onto the world's stage as a constructive member of the international community.

However, the reforms never came, and the emergency law put into place over 50 years ago remained. People were living in a constant fear that they would be turned in by a friend or neighbor for even a simple comment against the regime. The mail and internet were tracked by government officials, and websites such as facebook were blocked. This was not the secular democracy the West expected for a reformed Syria. It is instead an authoritarian dictatorship.

In the beginning the protests in Syria were small and peaceful, but were met with such brutality from the regime that they incited even greater public resistance. The Syrian people were rising up and claiming their natural right to freedom. President Assad authorized the massacre of women and children in a desperate attempt to retain control over a country that no longer wants him.

Mr. Speaker, this conflict has escalated into civil war. Those who have fared well under Assad's government have no desire for change, but the impoverished majority has found its voice and is unwilling to return to the status quo. I believe that the United States should stand with those who are fighting for democracy and human rights.

Kofi Annan's peace plan was a valiant effort to bring an end to the violence through diplomacy, but it has not yielded the results hoped for, and President Assad has shown no inclination to keep his promises. The time has come for greater action. Yesterday Secretary Clinton rightly criticized Russia for its continued support of the Assad regime, specifically the weapons it has been providing to the regime. This and other actions by the Russians undermine the efforts of the United Nations to broker a solution to meet this crisis.

The recent massacre in Houla a few days ago, which left over 50 children dead, is the most shocking example of official terror that has been occurring weekly over the past 15 months. President Assad has lost the confidence of the Syrian people who no longer regard his regime as legitimate. I believe that for the good of the country and for the cause of peace in the region President Assad should step down.

What began as a peaceful stand against tyranny has morphed into the bloodiest movement of the Arab Spring. With a grip as tight as the Assad family has had over this country for decades the outcome was foreseeable, but nobody could have envisioned anything as bloody as this.

Mr. Speaker, Syrian men and women fighting for democratic ideals should not be abandoned to face the wrath of a tyrant alone. They should know that they have a friend in

the United States and the United Nations. I call upon both to redouble their efforts to find a solution to the crisis in Syria. As a member of the Committee on Homeland Security I have seen how America is an example of democracy and peace, and I wish to see the same outcome for Syria. I stand today to show my support for the rebel fighters and all those in Syria who are fighting against oppression and cruelty.

**HONORING RITA CANNAN**

**HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD**

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 15, 2012*

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rita Cannan on her retirement from the Can Am Crown International Sled Dog Races.

Rita is stepping down from the Can-Am International Sled Dog Races after 15 years as its President and 19 years of dedicated service overall. Her remarkable efforts helped transform the community of Fort Kent, Maine into a premier dog sled racing location on the mushing map of North America.

The Can-Am International Sled Dog Races loses an incredible asset with Rita's departure. She is extremely well known in the Fort Kent community as a businesswoman and a civic leader. Rita has served as a member of the planning board, president of the Greater Fort Kent Chamber of Commerce, a trustee of the Northern Maine Medical Center, a member of the Aroostook County Tourism Board, a member and president of the Rotary Club, a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, a member of the Fish River Scenic By-Way Committee, and as a director of the University of Maine at Fort Kent Foundation. Without question, Rita's leadership was instrumental to the growth of Can-Am.

The recipient of countless awards and commendations issued by the town of Fort Kent and the State of Maine, there has been little left unsaid about Rita's enormous value to the community. I am pleased to join the members of the Can-Am Crown International Sled Dog Races, and the people of Maine, in congratulating Rita Cannan on her retirement.

Mr. Speaker, please join me again in congratulating Rita on achieving this milestone, and thanking her for her all that she has done for the community of Fort Kent.

**DR. BENJAMIN T. DURAN**

**HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 15, 2012*

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Benjamin Duran in the event of his retirement after fourteen years of dedicated service as Superintendent/President of Merced Community College District.

Dr. Duran has spent forty years as an educator in Merced County. His career began as a high school teacher in Le Grand. He served as Vice Principal of Le Grand High School from 1976 to 1980 before becoming the Assistant Director of Merced County's migrant